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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

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**BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS  
AND INTERFERENCES**

Application Number: 10/676,848  
Filing Date: September 30, 2003  
Appellant(s): HAMMAD ET AL.

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Chia-Chi A. Li  
For Appellant

**EXAMINER'S ANSWER**

This is in response to the appeal brief filed 12/06/10 appealing from the Office action mailed 07/06/10.

**(1) Real Party in Interest**

The examiner has no comment on the statement, or lack of statement, identifying by name the real party in interest in the brief.

**(2) Related Appeals and Interferences**

The examiner is not aware of any related appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

**(3) Status of Claims**

The following is a list of claims that are rejected and pending in the application: Claims 1, 3-6, 9-12, 14-21, 24-29, 42-52, 60-65, 68-69, 76-79 and 81-82 are rejected and pending in the application.

**(4) Status of Amendments After Final**

The examiner has no comment on the appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief.

**(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter**

The examiner has no comment on the summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief.

**(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal**

The examiner has no comment on the appellant's statement of the grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal. Every ground of rejection set forth in the Office action from which the appeal is taken (as modified by any advisory actions) is being maintained by the examiner except for the grounds of rejection (if any) listed under the

subheading "WITHDRAWN REJECTIONS." New grounds of rejection (if any) are provided under the subheading "NEW GROUNDS OF REJECTION."

**(7) Claims Appendix**

The examiner has no comment on the copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the appellant's brief.

**(8) Evidence Relied Upon**

US 2002/0082920	AUSTIN ET AL	06-2002
US 2002/0062249	IANNACCI	05-2002
US 20010016827	FERNANDEZ	08-2001

**(9) Grounds of Rejection**

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 3-6, 9-12, 14-21, 24-29, 42-52, 60-65, 68-69, 76-79 and 81-82 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iannacci (US

Art Unit: 3688

2002/0062249) in view of Fernandez (US 2001/0016827) and further in view of Austin (US 2002/0082920).

Claim 1, Iannacci teaches:

A method comprising:

determining a plurality of incentives using a distribution channel that are eligible for application to a transaction, the eligibility of each of the plurality of incentives is based on at least one product in the transaction, wherein each product in the transaction is associated with a product identifier that is used to determine the plurality of incentives, wherein at least two of the plurality of incentives are determined using the same product identifier in the transaction (see paragraph 235-238, 314, 334), wherein the product identifier is a stock keeping unit (SKU) (see paragraph 216);

determining using the distribution channel two or more incentives from the plurality of incentives to apply to the transaction (see paragraph 133);

wherein determining the two or more incentives comprises determining an incentive parameter for each of the determined two or more incentives and using the incentive parameters to determine how the determined two or more incentives are to be applied to the transaction (see paragraph 314), and

applying using the distribution channel the determined two or more incentives to the transaction (See paragraph 133);

wherein the distribution channel operates while determining the plurality of incentives, determining the two or more incentives, and applying the determined two or more incentives to the transaction (see paragraphs 126, 334). Iannacci does not teach said

Art Unit: 3688

distribution channel operates in an offline manner and wherein the incentive parameters comprise information indicating if an incentive is redeemable in the transaction with another incentive. However, Fernandez teaches a loyalty system where a point of sale terminal operates in an offline manner while determining the incentives to apply to a transaction (see paragraphs 26-31) and Austin teaches that it is old and well known in the promotion art at the time the application was made, to know that merchants define restrictions in how to redeem incentives, when one of such restrictions may require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives (see paragraph 57). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the application was made, to know that Iannacci would modify his invention to allow loyalty programs to run in stand alone (i.e. offline) point of sale terminals, as taught by Fernandez in order to eliminate the necessity to maintain continuous contact or access between point of sale terminals and a central server when administering a loyalty program and also Iannacci would modify his invention to define restrictions in redeeming incentives which would require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives, as taught by Austin in view that the claimed invention is simply a combination of old elements and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Claim 3, Iannacci teaches:

communicating with a portable device to determine portable device information (see paragraph 178);

wherein determining the plurality of incentives comprises using the portable device information to determine the plurality of incentives eligible for application to the transaction (see paragraph 178).

Claim 4, Iannacci teaches:

wherein determining the two or more incentives using a distribution channel comprises using the determined portable device information to determine the two or more incentives (see paragraph 178, 235-238, 334).

Claim 5, Iannacci teaches:

wherein using the determined portable device information comprises comparing the portable device information with information associated with the plurality of incentives to determine the plurality of incentives (see paragraph 164).

Claim 6, Iannacci teaches:

updating the portable device information in the portable device to indicate that the determined two or more incentives have been applied to the transaction (see paragraph 235-238, 314, 334).

Claim 9, Iannacci teaches:

wherein determining the two or more incentives using the distribution channel comprises comparing the information for applying the determined two or more incentives with transaction details for the transaction to determine the two or more incentives (see paragraph 312-334).

Claim 10, Iannacci teaches:

calculating a total value for the transaction, wherein a collective value of the two or more incentives when applied is equal to or less than the total value (see paragraph 318-334).

Claim 11, Iannacci teaches:

wherein applying the determined two or more incentives using the distribution channel comprises calculating a new total value based on the total value for the transaction less the value of the two or more incentives (see paragraph 318-334).

Claim 12, Iannacci teaches:

A method comprising:

determining using the distribution channel a plurality of incentives that are eligible for the loyalty transaction, the eligibility of each of the plurality of incentives is determined based on at least one product in the transaction, wherein each product in the transaction is associated with a product identifier that is used to determine the plurality of incentives, wherein at least two of the plurality of incentives are determined using the same product identifier, wherein the product identifier is a stock keeping unit (see paragraph 216, 235-238, 314, 334);

calculating an incentive value for each of the plurality of incentives using the distribution channel (see paragraph 133);

determining using the distribution channel two or more incentives from the plurality of incentives to apply to the loyalty transaction based on the calculated incentive values for each of the plurality of incentives (see paragraph 334);



wherein determining the two or more incentives comprises determining an incentive parameter for each of the determined two or more incentives and using the incentive parameters to determine how the determined two or more incentives are to be applied to the transaction (see paragraph 314),

and

applying using the distribution channel the determined two or more incentives to the loyalty transaction (see paragraph 150);

wherein the distribution channel operates while determining the plurality of incentives, calculating the incentive value, determining the two or more incentives, and applying the determined two or more incentives to the transaction (see paragraphs 126, 334). Iannacci does not teach said distribution channel operates in an offline manner and wherein the incentive parameters comprise information indicating if an incentive is excluded from being redeemed in the transaction with another incentive. However, Fernandez teaches a loyalty system where a point of sale terminal operates in an offline manner while determining the incentives to apply to a transaction (see paragraphs 26-31) and Austin teaches that it is old and well known in the promotion art at the time the application was made, to know that merchants define restrictions in how to redeem incentives, when one of such restrictions may require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives (see paragraph 57). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the application was made, to know that Iannacci would modify his invention to allow loyalty programs to run in stand alone (i.e. offline) point of sale terminals, as taught by Fernandez in order to eliminate

Art Unit: 3688

the necessity to maintain continuous contact or access between point of sale terminals and a central server when administering a loyalty program and also Iannacci would modify his invention to define restrictions in redeeming incentives which would require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives, as taught by Austin in view that the claimed invention is simply a combination of old elements and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Claim 14, Iannacci teaches:

wherein determining two or more incentives using the distribution channel comprises:

determining a highest incentive value from the calculated incentive values (see paragraph 311-334);

and

wherein applying the determined two or more incentives comprises applying an incentive with the highest incentive value (see paragraph 311-334).

Claim 15, Iannacci teaches:

determining if the incentive with the highest incentive value allows the incentive to be combined with other incentives using the distribution channel (see paragraph 277); and

if the incentive does allow for combining, determining another incentive to apply to the loyalty transaction in addition to the incentive with the highest value using the distribution channel (see paragraph 277).

Claim 16, Iannacci teaches:

calculating a total value for the loyalty transaction using the distribution channel, wherein a collective value of the two or more incentives is equal to or less than the calculated total value (see paragraph 311-334).

Claim 17, Iannacci teaches:

wherein applying the determined two or more incentives using the distribution channel comprising calculating a new total value from the total value based on the determined two or more incentives (see paragraph 311-334).

Claim 18, Iannacci teaches:

outputting the new total value using the distribution channel (see paragraph 311-328).

Claim 19, Iannacci teaches:

communicating with a portable device to determine portable device information;

wherein determining the plurality of incentives also comprises using the portable device information to determine the plurality of incentives that are eligible for the loyalty transaction (see paragraph 178).

Claim 20, Iannacci teaches:

updating portable device information in the portable device to indicate that the two or more incentives have been applied to the loyalty transaction (see paragraph 178).

Claim 21, Iannacci teaches:

A method comprising:

communicating with a portable device to conduct a loyalty transaction, the loyalty transaction involving at least one product having a product identifier (see paragraph 178);

determining portable device information for the portable device (see paragraph 178);

determining a plurality of incentives that are eligible for the loyalty transaction, the eligible incentives determined based on the product identifier and the portable device information wherein at least two of the plurality of incentives are determined using the same product identifier (see paragraph 235-238, 314, 334), wherein the product identifier is a stock keeping unit (see paragraph 216);

determining two or more incentives from the plurality of incentives to apply to the loyalty transaction (see paragraph 328-334);

wherein determining the two or more incentives comprises determining an incentive parameter for each of the determined two or more incentives and using the incentive parameters to determine how the determined two or more incentives are to be applied to the transaction (see paragraph 314),

and

applying the determined two or more incentives to the loyalty transaction (see paragraph 328-334).

wherein the distribution channel operates while determining the plurality of incentives, calculating the incentive value, determining the two or more incentives, and applying the determined two or more incentives to the transaction (see paragraphs 126, 334). Iannacci does not teach said distribution channel operates in an offline manner and wherein the incentive parameters comprise information indicating if an incentive is excluded from being redeemed in the transaction with another incentive. However, Fernandez teaches a loyalty system where a point of sale terminal operates in an offline manner while determining the incentives to apply to a transaction (see paragraphs 26-31) and Austin teaches that it is old and well known in the promotion art at the time the application was made, to know that merchants define restrictions in how to redeem incentives, when one of such restrictions may require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives (see paragraph 57). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the application was made, to know that Iannacci would modify his invention to allow loyalty programs to run in stand alone (i.e. offline) point of sale terminals, as taught by Fernandez in order to eliminate the necessity to maintain continuous contact or access between point of sale terminals and a central server when administering a loyalty program and also Iannacci would modify his invention to define restrictions in redeeming incentives which would require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives, as taught by Austin in view that the claimed invention is simply a combination of old elements and in the

Art Unit: 3688

combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Claim 24, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the information for applying comprises information indicating that an incentive having a nearest expiration date is to be applied (see paragraph 240).

Claim 25 and 36, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the information for applying comprises information indicating that a user preference is to be used to determine how to apply the two or more incentives (see paragraph 311-334).

Claim 26, Iannacci teaches:

wherein determining the two or more incentives comprises comparing the information for applying with transaction details for the loyalty transaction to determine the two or more incentives (see paragraph 311-334).

Claim 27, Iannacci teaches:

calculating a total value for the loyalty transaction, wherein a collective value of the two or more incentives when applied is equal to or less than the total value (see paragraphs 311-334; figure 14).

Claim 28, Iannacci teaches:

wherein applying the determined two or more incentives comprises calculating a new total value for the loyalty transaction based on the two or more incentives (see paragraphs 311-334; figure 14).

Claim 29, Iannacci teaches:

updating information in the portable device to indicate that the two or more incentives have been applied to the transaction (see paragraph 178).

Claim 42, Iannacci teaches:

A device for determining two or more incentives to apply to a loyalty transaction, the device comprising:

a communicator configured to receive a request to process a loyalty transaction involving at least one product associated with a product identifier (see paragraph 311-328);

a program determiner configured to determine a plurality of incentives that are eligible for application to the loyalty transaction, the eligibility of each of the plurality of incentives is based at least one product identifier in the loyalty transaction, wherein each product in the transaction is associated with a product identifier that is used to determine the plurality of incentives wherein at least two of the plurality of incentives are determined using the same product identifier in the loyalty transaction (see paragraph 311-334), wherein the product identifier is a stock keeping unit (see paragraph 216);

an incentive selector configured to select two or more incentives from the plurality of incentives to apply to the loyalty transaction (see paragraph 311-334);

wherein the selection of the two or more incentives comprises determining an incentive parameter for each of the determined two or more incentives and using the incentive parameters to determine how the determined two or more incentives are to be applied to the transaction (see paragraph 314),

Art Unit: 3688

and

an incentive applier configured to apply the determined two or more incentives to the loyalty transaction (see paragraph 311-334);

wherein the device comprises computer hardware (see paragraph 126), and wherein the device applies the two or more incentives to the loyalty transaction (see paragraphs 311-334). Iannacci does not teach said distribution channel operates in an offline manner and wherein the incentive parameters comprise information indicating if an incentive is excluded from being redeemed in the transaction with another incentive. However, Fernandez teaches a loyalty system where a point of sale terminal operates in an offline manner while determining the incentives to apply to a transaction (see paragraphs 26-31) and Austin teaches that it is old and well known in the promotion art at the time the application was made, to know that merchants define restrictions in how to redeem incentives, when one of such restrictions may require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives (see paragraph 57). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the application was made, to know that Iannacci would modify his invention to allow loyalty programs to run in stand alone (i.e. offline) point of sale terminals, as taught by Fernandez in order to eliminate the necessity to maintain continuous contact or access between point of sale terminals and a central server when administering a loyalty program and also Iannacci would modify his invention to define restrictions in redeeming incentives which would require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives, as taught by Austin in view that the claimed invention is simply a combination of old elements and in the



Art Unit: 3688

combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Claim 43, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the communicator is configured to communicate with a portable device to determine portable device information, the portable device information useable to determine the plurality of incentives or the selected two or more incentives (see paragraph 311-334).

Claim 44, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the communicator is configured to determine transaction details, the transaction details useable to determine the plurality of incentives or the selected two or more incentives (see paragraph 311-334).

Claim 45, Iannacci teaches:

an output configured to output a new total for the loyalty transaction based on the applied two or more incentives (see paragraph 311-334).

Claim 46, Iannacci teaches:

a database configured to store information for the plurality of loyalty programs, the information useable to determine the plurality of incentives or the selected two or more incentives (see paragraph 311-334).

Claim 47, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the communicator is configured to cause update information for the loyalty transaction to be written to a portable device (see paragraph 311-328).

Claim 48, Iannacci teaches:

A system for determining two or more incentives to apply to a loyalty transaction, the system comprising:

one or more portable devices, each portable device including portable device information (see paragraph 178); and

one or more distribution channels, at least one distribution channel comprising:

a communicator configured to communicate with a portable device in the one or more portable devices for a loyalty transaction involving at least one product associated with a product identifier and to determine portable device information associated with the portable device (see paragraph 178);

an incentive selector configured to determine two or more incentives from a plurality of incentives associated with the at least one product to apply to the loyalty transaction, wherein each product in the transaction is associated with a product identifier that is used to determine the plurality of incentives, the two or more incentives determined based on the at least one product and the portable device information wherein at least two of the plurality of incentives are determined using the same product identifier wherein the product identifier is a stock keeping unit (see paragraph 216, 311-334);

wherein determining the two or more incentives comprises determining an incentive parameter for each of the determined two or more incentives and using the

Art Unit: 3688

incentive parameters to determine how the determined two or more incentives are to be applied to the transaction (see paragraph 314),

and

an incentive applier configured to apply the determined two or more incentives to the loyalty transaction (see paragraph 311-334);

wherein the distribution channel operates while determining the plurality of incentive and applying the determined two or more incentives to the transaction (see paragraphs 126, 334). Iannacci does not teach said distribution channel operates in an offline manner and wherein the incentive parameters comprise information indicating if an incentive is excluded from being redeemed in the transaction with another incentive. However, Fernandez teaches a loyalty system where a point of sale terminal operates in an offline manner while determining the incentives to apply to a transaction (see paragraphs 26-31) and Austin teaches that it is old and well known in the promotion art at the time the application was made, to know that merchants define restrictions in how to redeem incentives, when one of such restrictions may require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives (see paragraph 57). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the application was made, to know that Iannacci would modify his invention to allow loyalty programs to run in stand alone (i.e. offline) point of sale terminals, as taught by Fernandez in order to eliminate the necessity to maintain continuous contact or access between point of sale terminals and a central server when administering a loyalty program and also Iannacci would modify his invention to define restrictions in redeeming incentives which would

Art Unit: 3688

require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives, as taught by Austin in view that the claimed invention is simply a combination of old elements and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Claim 49, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the at least one distribution channel further comprises a program determiner configured to determine the plurality of incentives associated with the at least one product (see paragraph 311-334).

Claim 50, Iannacci teaches:

a host configured to download information relating to the plurality of incentives to at least one distribution channel, wherein the information is useable to determine the two or more incentives (see paragraph 311-334).

Claim 51, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the information relating to the plurality of incentives comprises at least one of a rule based on a monetary value, a rule based on the at least one product and a user selection, a rule based on an expiration date, and a rule based on if an incentive in the plurality of incentives is combinable (see paragraph 240).

Claim 52, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the determined two or more incentives have a highest redemption value (see paragraphs 311-328).

Claim 60, Iannacci teaches:

wherein determining using the distribution channel two or more incentives from the plurality of incentives to apply to the transaction comprises: determining selection information; and determining the two or more incentives using the selection information (see paragraphs 311-334).

Claim 61, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the selection information comprises monetary values (see paragraphs 311-328).

Claim 62, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the selection information comprises expiration dates (see paragraph 240).

Claims 63-65, 68-69, Iannacci teaches:

wherein two or more incentives are offered by at least two different sponsors, wherein each sponsor is associated with a different loyalty program (see paragraph 238 “visa, circuit city, sprint are giving rewards for a 36” Sony TV”).

Claim 76, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the portable device is a first phone and wherein the distribution channel comprises a second phone (see paragraph 36, 119 “cellular networks”).

Claims 77-79, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the distribution channel comprises a physical point of sale device or a mobile device (see paragraph 126).

Claim 81, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the applying the determined two or more incentives to the transaction applies the two or more incentives to the same product (see paragraph 314).

Claim 82, Iannacci teaches:

wherein the applying the determined two or more incentives to the transaction applies the two or more incentives to the same product (see paragraph 314).

### **(10) Response to Argument**

The Appellant argues in pages 9-12 of the Brief with respect to claim 1 that the prior arts do not teach incentive parameters comprising information indicating if an incentive is redeemable in the transaction with another incentive. The Examiner answers that Austin teaches that it is old and well known in the promotion art at the time the application was made, to know that merchants define restrictions in how to redeem incentives, when one of such restrictions may require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives (see paragraph 57). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the application was made, to know that Iannacci would modify his invention to define restrictions (i.e. incentive parameters) in redeeming incentives which would require that an incentive may not be combined with other incentives, as taught by Austin in view that the claimed invention is simply a combination of old elements and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable. Therefore, contrary to Appellant's argument the prior arts teach Appellant's claimed invention.

The Appellant argues in pages 11-13 of the Brief that the prior arts do not teach “determining an incentive parameter for each of the determined two or more incentives and using the incentive parameters to determine how the determine two or more incentives are to be applied to the transaction” and where “each product in the transaction is associated with a product identifier that is used to determine the plurality of incentives, wherein at least two of the plurality of incentives are determined using the same product identifier in the transaction”. The Examiner answers that Iannacci teaches using a same product identifier in a transaction (i.e. Tide detergent) to provide to a consumer at least two of the plurality of incentives, such as \$1.00 manufacturer coupon and 10% member loyalty discounts (see paragraph 314). Therefore, contrary to Appellant's argument the prior arts teach Appellant's claimed invention.

The Appellant argues in pages 14-15 that obviousness has not been because according to the Appellant, the read/write unit in Fernandez is designed to operate entirely in an offline manner. The Examiner answers that Fernandez teaches that the read/write unit connects with a central server in order to receive updated information and also to transmit log information (see paragraphs 26, 30). Therefore, contrary to Appellant's argument, the Fernandez's read/write units do not operate entirely offline and the prior arts are combinable.

The Applicant argues in page 16 of the Brief with respect to claim 6 that none of the prior art recites a portable consumer device, nor they recite updating portable device information to indicate that the determined two or more incentives have been applied to the transaction. The Examiner answers that Iannacci teaches that consumers receive

Art Unit: 3688

incentives for using as payment a preferred credit card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard) where the credit card account is updated at the transaction to indicate earned incentives (see paragraph 314). Therefore, contrary to Appellant's argument the prior arts teach Appellant's claimed invention.

The Appellant argues in page 16 of the Brief that the prior arts do not teach claim 81. Please, see above paragraphs in this section response to argument for Examiner response.

**(11) Related Proceeding(s) Appendix**

No decision rendered by a court or the Board is identified by the examiner in the Related Appeals and Interferences section of this examiner's answer.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,

/DANIEL LASTRA/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3688  
January 31, 2011

Conferees:

/JOHN G. WEISS/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3688

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